

22 April 1953

BRIEFING NOTES FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

The recent Soviet conciliatory moves and Communist proposals on Korea suggest that the new leaders in Moscow have adopted a new tactical line and have modified their shortrange policies. These moves are aimed at relaxing international tensions and reducing American vigilance and preparedness in order to attain a greater field for maneuver.

There have been no changes, however, in the basic Soviet strategic objectives of consolidating the Soviet Orbit and isolating and weakening the US. The new regime has probably concluded that the disadvantages of a continuation of the Korean war outweigh the advantages and that a Korean truce will remove an embarrassing obstacle to the effectiveness of its "peace offensive."

Internal considerations do not appear at present to have been the primary determinant of the current tactical shift. However, the need of the new Soviet regime to reassign top responsibilities and to revise some internal policies probably will contribute to a continuation of the "peace offensive."

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Approved For Release 2003/09/02 : CIA-RDP79R00890A000100030011-1

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Various events of the past two months have stimulated many different speculations concerning a power struggle within the Kremlin. The available evidence, however, strongly suggests that temporarily, at least, an uneasy equilibrium had been reached, wherein collective decisions are taken probably as a result of compromises. Such a condition may well be prolonged for some time. It seems inevitable, however, that eventually an intense struggle will ensue and control of the USSR will once again revert to one man.